



GOD'S FALL FESTIVALS—PART 2: DAY OF ATONEMENT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR PARENTS TEACHING THEIR CHILDREN GOD'S WAY

Photo: Susan Winnail - Tampa, Florida

AFTER THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS, the next holy day we come to is what the Bible calls the Day of Atonement. Remember, the fall holy days represent important events or periods of time that have not happened yet, but will happen very soon in the future. Just as the Feast of Trumpets represents the return of Jesus Christ, the Day of Atonement pictures another very important event which will happen after Christ comes back to Earth. What big, exciting event does this special holy day picture? Read on!

THIS STUDY GUIDE is written for the purpose of helping parents teach their children vital Biblical topics in a focused, easy-to-follow format. Each section is not meant to be taught in one lesson, rather the topics are organized so parents can choose specific areas of focus and gear lessons toward the learning styles and ages of their children. Each topic is presented in a straightforward manner with accompanying verses for study.

The main study should always come from the Scripture itself, while these lessons can act as a guide for reading passages from the Bible. Each lesson packet includes memory verses, questions for meaningful discussion, and activities (added at the end of the packet). Also, though some things may be labeled as Level 1, 2, or 3, the activities, questions, and scriptures for memorizing can be used to fit the needs and learning levels for children of all ages. Enjoy!



ATONEMENT AND THE SOLEMN SABBATH REST

Let's begin by reading about the Day of Atonement in the book of Leviticus, where it is mentioned along with all of God's other special holy days. Just like the other holy days, God gave His people special and specific instructions about how to keep the Day of Atonement.

Read Leviticus 23:26-32

Go back and have a look at verse 28. What is the reason that God gives the people for telling them to keep the Day of Atonement? It says, "to make atonement for you before the Lord your God." So, what does that mean?

Let's have a look at the word "atonement". If we break "atonement" into three words, those words would be "AT-ONE-MENT", and that meaning fits. Atonement in the Bible means being "at-one" with God. But the word "atonement" is more than simply being in agreement. To make atonement means to "make amends". In other words, we become "at-one" or in harmony with God by acknowledging that we've done wrong things and are going to change and do better. And with Christ's sacrifice and help, we come into harmony with God our Father. We become "at one" with God.



Check for Yourself!

What day of the year are God's people commanded to keep the Day of Atonement?



Stop and think:

What special things do you notice about these instructions? Is there anything that seems different about the way this day is to be kept from the other holy days? (There are two main differences)

GOD'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

What were the instructions God gave the Israelites about keeping Atonement from Leviticus 23? Let's break it down into some points:

- It is to be kept on the 10th day of the 7th month (How many days after the Feast of Trumpets is that?)
- It is called the "Day of Atonement"
- It is to be kept with a holy convocation
- God's people are to afflict their souls on this day
- A special offering is given
- No work is to be done at all
- It is a Sabbath of *solemn rest*
- It is to be kept from evening to evening (sunset to sunset)

One instruction that isn't given for any of the other holy days is the command to "afflict your souls". What does this mean? How do we "afflict our soul"? We get the answer from the Bible. In Psalm 35:13 we read that David **humbled** or **afflicted** his soul with **fasting** (the same Hebrew word is translated both "afflicted" and "humbled"). In the book of Esther we read that she asked her people to **fast** on her behalf, and said they

should not **eat** or **drink** (Esther 4:16). Fasting is mentioned many times in the Bible and generally means not eating or drinking. When we fast, we feel hungry and weak. That's what it means to "afflict" or "humble" our soul.

So why would God give us this command? Did God really mean that on this special holy day no one is supposed to eat or drink anything at all?! Why would He want us to do that? That doesn't seem very much like a feast day! Well, it turns out that God has some very good and very happy reasons for wanting His people to give up eating or drinking on this special day. But first, let's have a look at some other things that the Old Testament says about Atonement.



THE JOB OF THE HIGH PRIEST

There are other places in the Old Testament which talk about the Day of Atonement. One is also in the book of Leviticus. It talks about some very important instructions that the priests were to follow on that day.

Read Leviticus 16

One of the first things we learn from this chapter is that the high priest was only allowed to go into the holy place in the tabernacle one time each year, and that was on the Day of Atonement. The high priest was told to "make atonement" for the people before God. The sins of the people had separated them from God, so they needed to be "at one" with Him again. The only way atonement could be made was through the high priest when he went before God on the Day of Atonement.



Think for a Moment:

If you go back and read Leviticus 16, you will find that the high priest was expected to wear special clothes and bathe in a certain way before he could go into the tabernacle. Why do you think God wanted him to do this before coming before Him? Do you remember another time when God's people had to wash themselves and wear clean clothes before they came before Him? (Hint: It's in Exodus!)



Consider this:

What do you think it would have been like for Paul and His companions to keep the Day of Atonement during that long voyage?

NEW TESTAMENT

The phrase "Day of Atonement" is not used in the New Testament books, but that doesn't mean this holy day is not in there! The Bible is full of surprises, and sometimes you have to look carefully to find things. One clue we have about Atonement is that it is a fast day. Even though Christians may choose to fast at different times of the year, the Day of Atonement is the only yearly fast day commanded by God for us to keep. So when we find "the Fast" mentioned in the book of Acts, we have a pretty good idea that it is talking about the Day of Atonement.

Read Acts 27:9

Remember how each of God's holy days represent different events in history and in the future? To figure out what the Day of Atonement represents we have to go to the book of Revelation.



Discuss:

Who is Satan? Why is he going to get locked up in a pit for 1,000 years?

Read Revelation 20:1-3

We get a clue that this great event is related to Atonement from a couple things. First, it fits the timeline. In Revelation 19, the Bible talks about Christ's return which we know is related to the Feast of Trumpets. The Day of Atonement happens soon after Trumpets on the calendar, so it would have to relate to an event that happens after Christ returns.

We get another clue from the Old Testament. Can you guess what it is? Did you remember those two goats? This is where they come in. Remember, back in Leviticus God told the high priest that one of the goats was supposed to be for God, and the other was to be led away into the wilderness.

The one for God was to represent the payment for all the sins of the people by being sacrificed, and the other one was to take the blame on its head and be sent away. The first one represents Jesus Christ. He was the one who paid for our sins by being sacrificed for us. The other one, if you haven't guessed yet, represents Satan who will be locked up in a deep pit for 1,000 years! Just like the goat called "Azazel", Satan will be led away, not able to bother anyone for a long while!

THE TIME OF JUBILEE

The Day of Atonement is related to another special event in the Bible. In the book of Leviticus, God told the people that every fifty years was to be a special time called the Year of Jubilee, or the Year of Release. This special time was to begin on the Day of Atonement!

Read Leviticus 25

Have you ever seen the Liberty bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania? The bell was made in 1753, around the time that the United States was becoming a new nation. On the bell is written the verse "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10) which is talking about the year of Jubilee! On the Day of Atonement, the Jubilee would begin and liberty would be announced to all the people of the land! Just think, when Satan is finally locked up, true liberty will finally be announced to all the earth!

People will finally be free from his evil lies and troublemaking!



Something to Ponder:

*What does the word liberty mean? (You may need some help from a dictionary.)
How will there be liberty when Satan is bound in the deep pit?*

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT TODAY

Just like the other holy days, the Day of Atonement is something we continue to keep every year! Go back and look at the list of instructions for the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16; 23). What things do we still observe that the Israelites were told to do? What are some things we are no longer required to do on the Day of Atonement?

Even though Atonement is a solemn occasion, it is also a joyful one as we think about and prepare for a world without the suffering and evil caused by the adversary. It helps us look forward to, with even more excitement, the next holy days in God's plan!



Discuss:

Why do you think God makes such a strong point to rest on the Day of Atonement? If we are not to be working, what things does God expect us to be doing instead?





QUESTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION



Level 1

1. The high priest was allowed to enter the holiest place in the tabernacle once a year on the Day of Atonement. Before he went in, he had to wash himself and wear special clothing. Why do you think God wanted him to do that before coming before His presence? How does being clean and dressing nicely show respect? What is an example of a time when you have done this?
2. Discuss the tabernacle, what it looked like, and why God wanted the Israelites to have one. Remember, it is a representation of God's house and His presence. What were some of the things that were done at the tabernacle? You may want to find a picture or a diagram to see all the different parts of the tabernacle and understand how they were used.
3. God tells us that Atonement is a day of fasting which means He does not want us to eat any food. How could not eating food for a day help us be more thankful?

Level 2

1. On the day of Atonement, what kind of man was supposed to take the goat called "azazel" into the wilderness? What were all the instructions for this man?
2. Thinking about what will happen in the future on the Day of Atonement, why do you think God put this holy day after the Feast of Trumpets?
3. Fasting helps us come closer to God. How do you think it does that?

Level 3

1. We no longer have a tabernacle like the Israelites did, but we do have a High Priest. Who is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16)? It is because of Him that we are able to go directly before God when we pray. What do you like about being able to talk directly to God, our Father in Heaven?
2. The Bible tells us that His faithful people will be leaders and teachers in the Millennium. In what ways do you think it will be helpful when teaching people about God's way to have Satan removed from the scene?
3. Is there anything you don't understand about the Day of Atonement? Ask your parents to discuss it with you! It's amazing what you can learn when you ask questions!

MEMORY VERSES

FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Level 1

Leviticus 23:27 Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

Level 2

Leviticus 16:9-10 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

Level 3

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

ACTIVITIES

FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Activity 1: Thankful for Atonement - Collage

While we can't eat anything on Atonement, we should be focusing on why God wants us to fast and not be simply counting down the minutes to sunset. This activity focuses on gratitude for what God has done for us.

Related Verses: Leviticus 23:27; Isaiah 58:6-9, 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; James 1:17

Supplies:

- "Thankful for Atonement" Printable Sheet
- Blank Paper
- Old magazines with pictures (something that your parents don't mind cutting up)
- Pen/Pencil
- Scissors
- Diluted glue (mix glue with water to make a liquid glue paste)
- Bowl or tupperware container (to mix glue)
- Old small paintbrush

Directions:

1. Discuss: On Atonement, God wants us to fast. We are not to eat or drink anything for the entire day from sunset to sunset. Eating takes up a lot of time and can be distracting for us when we are trying to focus. When we don't have food to eat, we remember where our food comes from. Where does our food come from?
2. God gives us every blessing that we enjoy! Using the "Thankful for Atonement" printable sheet, make a list of things we can be thankful for that God has given to us. Now, add to it anything else that we can be thankful for specifically on the Day of Atonement. Try thinking about the meaning of the day to get some ideas.
3. Once you have finished the list, find pictures from the magazines that you think would best represent the items on your list. Carefully cut them out using the scissors.
4. In the bowl, mix a little bit of glue with some water (just enough to give it more of a runny consistency). Using the paintbrush, carefully brush the glue onto the backs of the magazine pictures and carefully paste onto the blank paper. Repeat until all the pictures are pasted. Let dry.
5. Once the glue is dry, you can label your collage by writing the things the pictures represent on the collage. If you couldn't find pictures to represent some of your items, you can draw them yourself or find a picture online.
6. Take some time to talk about the things you have chosen and review how not eating on Atonement can help us be more aware of what God has given to us.

Activity 2: The Stain of Sin

This activity is meant to teach about the consequences of sin and how only God can make us pure again after we have been stained with sin. Note: This one needs parental assistance!

Related Verses: Romans 3:21-26; Revelation 20:14; Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 5:25-27

Supplies:

- White cotton fabric
- A few berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, etc.)
- Water
- Kettle for boiling water
- Large bowl or pot (something that won't be damaged with heat)

Directions:

1. Discuss: When we sin, it's like making a big mess or stain on our shirt. We are no longer pure and clean.
2. Take your piece of fabric (a white cotton undershirt would work fine - just be sure it is a piece of fabric you don't mind making a little dirty) and squeeze berry juice onto it. The berries should leave spots of juice all over the fabric.
3. Drape fabric over bowl so stain is on top.
4. Discuss: The only way we can be made clean again is if God washes us up.
5. Have a parent help you boil water in the kettle. Once the water is boiled, have your parent pour the water over the stain.
6. Keep pouring! Watch the stain disappear!
7. Talk about what sin is and what Satan's role is in this world. Also, discuss how Christ can make us clean again and how He wants us to be pure. Talk about what this has to do with the Day of Atonement.